

**CONFIDENTIAL**

DD/P 6-0791

66-847

28 FEB 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Vice President

SUBJECT: Briefing Paper on Rural Construction  
Cadre Program

1. During your recent trip to Saigon, you were briefed on the rural construction cadre program by the CIA Chief of Station in Saigon, Mr. Gordon L. Jorgensen. Mr. Jorgensen has advised me that you requested a full resume of the briefing to include any points which were not covered in the limited time available in Saigon. As you requested, Mr. Jorgensen delivered prior to your departure a resume of the briefing to your Administrative Assistant, Mr. William Connell.

2. Subsequently, Mr. Jorgensen has forwarded to me a resume of the briefing which contains some minor variations and is, in our view, an improvement on the paper which was handed to Mr. Connell. I suggest that the attached revised resume, which has the concurrence of Deputy Ambassador William J. Porter, be substituted for the paper which was handed to Mr. Connell.

3. I appreciate the opportunity you provided for the briefing in Saigon by Mr. Jorgensen. If you desire clarification or additional details concerning CIA's role in the vitally important rural construction program, I trust that you will not hesitate to call on me.

(signed) W. F. Raborn

W. F. Raborn

Signature Recommended

(Signed) Desmond FitzGerald

24 FEB 1966

Approved For Release 2002/08/21 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000100040007-2

Date

**CONFIDENTIAL**

GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**BRIEFING ON RURAL CONSTRUCTION CADRE**

**FOR**

**VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY**

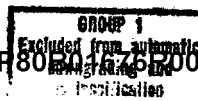
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. **Selection of Rural Construction Cadre**
2. **Training and Indoctrination of Rural Construction Cadre**
3. **Management and Support of Rural Construction Cadre**
4. **Probable Future Trends within Rural Construction Cadre Operations**

**February 11, 1966**

**Presented by Gordon L. Jorgensen  
Special Assistant to the Ambassador  
U. S. Embassy, Saigon**

**CONFIDENTIAL**



**CONFIDENTIAL**

**1. Selection of Rural Construction Cadre**

a. Direct recruitment from the rural population, under the supervision of province and district chiefs, has been the rule to date. The bulk of these recruits has been volunteers, although it should be recognized that the alternatives to joining the rural construction cadre are not too attractive--that is, joining the VC, joining the RVN Armed Forces, or taking one's chances on evading the GVN draft law.

b. Commencing with the next class, scheduled to enter training on 31 February 1968, three other cadres--totaling some 6,000 men comprising the mobile administrative cadre, the new life hamlet, and the rural political cadre--will also be sent to Vung Tau for training or for calling out. Approximately 1500 - 2,000 of this total of 6,000 will enter Vung Tau in the next class.

c. Up to now candidates for the cadre are largely male, and about 50 per cent fall within the present military draft age limits, i.e., between the ages of 20 to 30, the remaining 50 per cent are divided about evenly between youth under 20 and men over 30. A considerable number of women, although the proportion is still small and probably does not exceed 1 woman to 30 men, has been successfully utilized and this number may well and profitably increase. They are trained for--(1) prenatal, postnatal, and emergency delivery; (2) normal first aid for common village ailments; (3) combat first aid for team members; (4) teaching young children of lower primary school ages; and (5) for political, psychological, and intelligence work among village women who, in Vietnam as elsewhere, exercise a large influence in their families and communities.

d. While literacy is desired and facilitates instruction, it is not required. The training establishment at Vung Tau has learned how to train and assess illiterate individuals without using written methods.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

2.

e. The teams of cadre from each province and district normally remain intact during the training period. The actual designation of team leaders is sometimes done by the local province or district chiefs prior to the teams' being dispatched to Vung Tau--is sometimes done at Vung Tau--or may be done after the teams' return to their home areas. The faculty at Vung Tau does a remarkably good job of identifying leadership or other potential skills during the 10 weeks that the cadre are under their supervision. This accomplishment owes a great deal to the presence of "guides" with each group of students. These guides are really apprentice instructors, selected from the ranks of experienced cadre in the field. They spend most of every working day with the various groups of students, attending to one such group for the entire 13-week training period.

f. Province and district chiefs are used to examine the personal histories of candidates for Vung Tau, and are urged whenever possible to identify either security risks or problem-types. Some province and district chiefs do this very well. Many do not. Accordingly, after reaching Vung Tau, and as a first requirement, all candidates fill in a personal history statement and are photographed and fingerprinted. These last are permanent records maintained at Vung Tau.

g. The major reasons for dismissal of students prior to completion of Vung Tau training courses are--(1) health--malaria being the most common ailment; (2) maladjustment or homesickness; and (3) disciplinary difficulties. In the last course at Vung Tau there were 100 dropouts out of an entering class of 3,200. Over 70 per cent of the dropouts were for health reasons.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

1.

2. **Training and Indoctrination of Rural Construction Cadre**

a. Up through 4 February 1966, the curriculum at Vung Tau consisted of a 10-week course for political action teams (PATs) divided into political and psychological subject--45 per cent - para-military subjects--45 per cent - and intelligence subjects--10 per cent.

b. The next course, commencing 21 February, and designed to train the new rural construction cadres, as opposed to PATs, will run 13 weeks instead of the former 10 weeks. The additional three weeks will be utilized to instruct those portions of the cadre performing such new functions as armed census grievance, civic affairs, new life development, and organizing the self-defense and early warning capabilities of the village population.

c. **Cadre Training Capacity:**

(1) As of one year ago, i. e., 1 January 1965, Vung Tau had a training capacity of approximately 300 people. Since that date, there has been a steady increase in the number of students in each class with the last PAT class finishing on 4 February 1966 totalling approximately 3,100 students, of whom approximately 119 were women. The first rural construction cadre class, commencing on 21 February 1966, will comprise 4,800 students if the quotas approved by the government can be met by the province chiefs.

(2) The training capacity at Vung Tau will be raised to 6,000 students for the class commencing early June, 1966, and to 7,500 students for the class commencing in early September, 1966. In order to operate efficiently at present capacity of 4,800 it will be necessary to find a more adequate source of potable water at Vung Tau and to secure release by the Vietnamese Air Force of a large bombing and strafing practice area located adjacent to the Vung Tau training site. This additional space is needed for a training and maneuver area.

(3) The new Montagnard rural construction cadre training site, located at Pleiku, was originally established in the

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

4.

early spring of 1965 and produced the first class of Montagnard PATS, totaling about 400 people, in May 1965. At the present time, it is operating at a capacity of 800 students every 10 or 11 weeks and has facilities for teaching in 10 Montagnard languages. The first class of the new Montagnard rural construction cadre will commence in the near future. It is anticipated that the training capacity at Pleiku will be increased, and may reach 1,200 - 1,500 per class by the end of 1966.

d. Reasons for the continued expansion of training capacity at the rural construction cadre training centers:

(1) The teams appear to be effective in gradually "engaging" the population in the war alongside the government. It would, therefore, appear wise to be prepared to produce more of the same product in order to hasten the enemy's frustration and/or defeat. General Thang, the Rural Construction Minister, speaks of there being 2,600 villages in South Vietnam, of which 650 are generally considered already pacified (though still needing some attention), and of which another 650 will be pacified by the end of calendar year 1967. As noted above, General Thang admits that the first 650 need further attention and that, after pacifying the second 650, the effort will have to continue against the remaining 1,300 villages since to falter or stop then will simply discourage the loyal, intensify doubt among inhabitants of "contested" areas, and encourage the enemy and strengthen his control over that portion of the population already supporting him. Manpower requirements for rural construction may, therefore, grow to very large numbers. Accordingly, it is only prudent to have an adequate training capacity, to include faculty, ready to meet probable requirements including emergencies, or to exploit enemy vulnerabilities.

(2) As large numbers are absorbed into the program, it is anticipated that the quality of manpower may decrease somewhat, with a resulting substantial increase in the number of dropouts during training. To compensate for this loss, the training capacity should be increased.

(3) As the cadre program continues, there are going

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

5.

to be growing needs for specialized training, e. g., leadership training, refresher training, and in new techniques, etc. . This will become a rather sizeable requirement in the near future--particularly for refresher training--but it should not be allowed to interfere with the continued training of an adequate number of new rural construction cadre. In short, with a total capacity of 7,500 at Vung Tau, 5,000 spaces could be devoted to new cadre and 2,500 spaces to the other kinds of training just described.

(4) The Vung Tau faculty has been working overtime for more than a year, always being stretched to catch up with new increases in the student body and with new additions to the subject matter being taught. The faculty is going to go "stale" unless at least a two-week break can be interposed between classes. The only way to compensate for this loss of time is to increase the training capacity.

(5) Considerable pressure is already building up to move teams from one village to another village in two months' time, three months' time, or six months' time, etc. . While this may be possible in some instances it is, generally speaking, the exception. Accordingly, it is very unwise indeed to plan on such rapid displacement. A far sounder rule of thumb is a minimum of one year to a village. Some of the steam behind this injudicious impulse to move teams prematurely can be reduced if there is an adequate supply of new teams coming out of Vung Tau to meet new requirements and opportunities. Conversely, if there isn't an adequate flow of new teams coming out of Vung Tau, this dangerous and superficial tendency to displace existing teams prematurely will be encouraged, and the old story will be repeated, i. e., the enemy will be oozing back around friendly flanks, into the interstices, etc. .

(6) Casualties among Agency-sponsored cadre during calendar year 1965 totaled 354 KIA and 500 WIA. In addition, there were 51 missing in action. Casualties will increase as the rural construction cadre expands into contested areas, thereby creating an additional requirement for trained replacements.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

6.

c. Peculiarities of training:

(1) The personality and experience of Captain Mai, the present Director of Training, are essential to the success of the Vung Tau training establishment, and in particular to the very effective indoctrination which is accomplished during an individual cadre's study at Vung Tau. It is also doubtful that the bulk of the present faculty would remain if Captain Mai were to be removed from this position. He is a very thoughtful, intense and dedicated man--by no means humorless, who as a young Tonkinese fought in the resistance (Viet Minh) against the French.

(2) Captain Mai has arranged the curriculum, particularly those portions dedicated to political and psychological operations, so that the instruction actually amounts to an expertly guided tour for each student through the history of his race and society. The tour is so conducted that each of these students from rural Vietnam, where education is meager, emerges with two dominant convictions: (1) that he has reason to take pride in his nation and now is the time for him to help and (2) that the rural people or peasantry have always been a great reservoir of Vietnamese national strength in times of crisis, and can become a source of such strength again if treated with respect and affection. What is important here is that so far as the students are concerned, these conclusions are consciously and rationally arrived at, hence constitute a firm and adequate basis for refuting Communist propaganda both in the cadre's mind and in the mind of the villager.

(3) Group singing is used very deliberately as a means of relaxation, as a means of strengthening spirit, and as a means of tightening group and team cohesiveness and loyalty. The teams are taught to sing a new song each week and by the end of the course have learned ten. The number will undoubtedly change to 13 songs shortly. The songs, whatever number, are sometimes appropriate to the cadre and its duties--in other cases they are broadly patriotic and inspirational--and are appropriate to any Vietnamese and can, therefore, be effectively taught and sung by the villagers.

**CONFIDENTIAL**



**CONFIDENTIAL**

7

(4) Training is long and rigorous. The average day includes 11 hours of training and indoctrination or study. The working week averages 6, often 7, working days. At least part of each day is devoted to some kind of competitive athletics, competitive singing, competitive shooting, etc.

(5) Since the various teams retain their district or province identity and live together during training, competitive sports, competitive shooting and competitive singing, a considerable confidence in their own group and a pride in belonging to it are developed. Such confidence in any group of fellow human beings larger than one's own family is rather rare in South Vietnam. In any case, this mutual reliance and group loyalty explain in part the subsequent effective performance in the villages and against the VC.

(6) Training is constantly refreshed by experience through the device of short seminars in which selected team leaders recalled from the field participate. One such two-day seminar, for example, considered the critical problem of how a team might best approach a new hamlet and village for the first time. It was pointed out that to come early in the day meant that the team was interfering with the family having breakfast or with the father going to the field. If one entered the village at the end of the day, one found both the father and the mother tired. Coming at midday one found the men of the house absent in the field. However, the seminar concluded, if one respected the old village etiquette, namely, that one did not enter a house with women in it while the men of the house were away, there was a certain advantage in coming at midday. The mother would then see that the team knew and respected the old etiquette; and after lunch, while the wife was sleeping, the children would be sure to be playing--since they didn't like to take naps. This was an opportunity to make contact with the children, give them some simple gift, such as candy, or show them how to make a toy out of straw or wood, thus ensuring that when the mother awoke, the children would report favorably on the behavior of the strangers. Also, it would be easy for the team, while talking to the children, to find out who were the head men of the hamlet or village, and also to identify some simple work which they could accomplish during the afternoon which would assist a family or the whole village, which could be completed by nightfall, and would therefore be noted favorably

**CONFIDENTIAL**

8.

by the men returning from the field and by the old people remaining in the village. Having done this much, the team should wait quietly until the men had come in from the fields and had had time to visit with their families, to receive reports on the strangers in the village, and to have finished the evening meal. The team in the meantime should prepare its evening meal and eat separately from the villagers. At this point it would finally be appropriate to call at the home of one or two of the senior village officials or family heads. The talk should be brief, should explain the general purpose of the team, should invite the villagers' confidence, and assure the villagers that the team would pay for any local food used. The team should then withdraw, noting that they were taking up positions during the night to ensure the safety of the village, and the villagers could accordingly sleep without fear.

Comment: The above detail is provided because it illustrates the care and ingenuity with which the cadre personnel have in the past analyzed some of the small but important details which, if improperly handled, can impair or negate even the best-intentioned efforts to regain the confidence and revive the political initiative and loyalty of the rural population. The chances of success in this venture are, of course, enormously increased by the fact that practically all the cadre members are from the countryside themselves, and dress and look and talk and act like the rest of the people in the villages rather than looking like "city slickers" or "government bureaucrats"--both of which categories, like the professional soldier, are suspect in rural Vietnam as in rural communities worldwide.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

9.

3. **Management and Support of Rural Construction Cadre Training and Operations**

a. **National Level:**

(1) Prior to December, 1965, the Agency, with the personal approval of successive prime ministers, has dealt directly with province and district chiefs in the management and support of this cadre program, then known as PATS or APA's (Advance Political Action teams) or CG's (Census Grievance teams).

(2) Upon his appointment as Rural Construction Minister in the fall of 1965, General Thang surveyed the existing cadre programs and resources and concluded that he was going to recommend to his government that the PAT program and the Vung Tau training establishment be made the basis or the nucleus of the new rural construction program. He then came to the Agency and asked for assurances that Agency support of its old and his new program would continue for a minimum of two to three years while the GVN learned how to take over the responsibility. After consulting Ambassador Lodge and Agency Headquarters, Washington, the necessary assurance of continuing Agency support was given General Thang.

25X1

(4) As a result of the factors just noted above, the

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

10.

national level management of this cadre program is now the primary responsibility of the Rural Construction Ministry on the Vietnamese side and of the Agency and USAID on the U. S. side, with MACV and JUSPAO in a support role. A joint control center for cadre operations, manned by both U. S. and Vietnamese personnel, will open for business in the next few days.

(5) The major danger is that Saigon will find it impossible to confine its direction and support to the broader aspects of the program and will incline instead to overmanage to the point where it stifles the initiative of the various provinces and district chiefs and of the rural construction cadre team chiefs. Such initiative, at these local levels, is absolutely indispensable to any success in pacification or rural construction. This danger of over-management and over-coordination at the national level pertains to the U. S. as well as the Vietnamese side.

(6) General Thang has wisely decided to inform the corps and division commanders in the RVN Armed Forces of the substance of the rural construction program, to include the role of the cadre who constitute the heart and "cutting edge" of any effective rural construction effort in the countryside. By so doing, he has probably succeeded in enlisting their support. This much is excellent. The danger is that Vietnamese military commanders may attempt to interpose themselves in the direct command line between General Thang, as Minister of Rural Construction, and the individual chiefs of province, district, village and cadre teams. The independent initiative and responsibility of these levels, as previously noted, is absolutely essential to rural construction.

(7) On the Vietnamese side, management heretofore has consisted of the province and district chiefs, assisted by one or more of their own staff--frequently the deputy province chief for security, the Agency officer in the province, and a Vietnamese staff selected jointly, in most cases, by the province or district chief in consultation with the Agency representative. The MACV advisors, at sector and sub-sector level, have been most helpful in terms of ensuring that cadre operations are adequately coordinated with proposed U. S. or GVN military operations, have frequently organized the appropriate military reaction to intelligence on the VC

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

11.

provided by the cadre teams, and have assisted Agency officers in the actual operations and deployment of the PAT teams. This close, informal, and mutually reinforcing relationship is important and must continue into the new era of rural construction.

(8) Under the new auspices of the Rural Construction Ministry, the methods of management at province and district levels will inevitably change somewhat. For example, the decrees establishing the rural construction cadre provide for a 15-man management team at each province. It is hoped that this management team can be largely--or at least partially--staffed with some of the experienced Vietnamese who are already assisting in the control and support of this program. Secondly, it is obvious that USAID, as the second of the two major U. S. agencies responsible for the cadre, must participate to a much greater extent than heretofore.

(9) As the National Police begin to reach a strength adequate for downward deployment into districts and villages--and this has only just begun--it is obvious that the rural construction cadre and those elements of the police stationed in the countryside, to include the regular police, the Special Branch and the Police Field Force, must work together in close harmony. This will require a similarly close relationship among USAID Public Safety and Agency advisors to these respective programs, and between them and their Vietnamese counterparts. At some future date, when security conditions in the countryside permit, a phased demobilization of the rural construction cadre should commence, with the first phase seeing the incorporation into the police of those rural construction cadre desiring such a career, and the second phase seeing the remainder of the cadre revert to peacetime occupations.

(10) At the rural construction cadre or team level, General Thang has already made several wise decisions about leadership and training. One such decision is that all rural construction team leaders will be selected from graduates of Vung Tau. A second, equally important decision, is that all team members, regardless of their ultimate specialty, will complete the 10-week basic course

**CONFIDENTIAL**

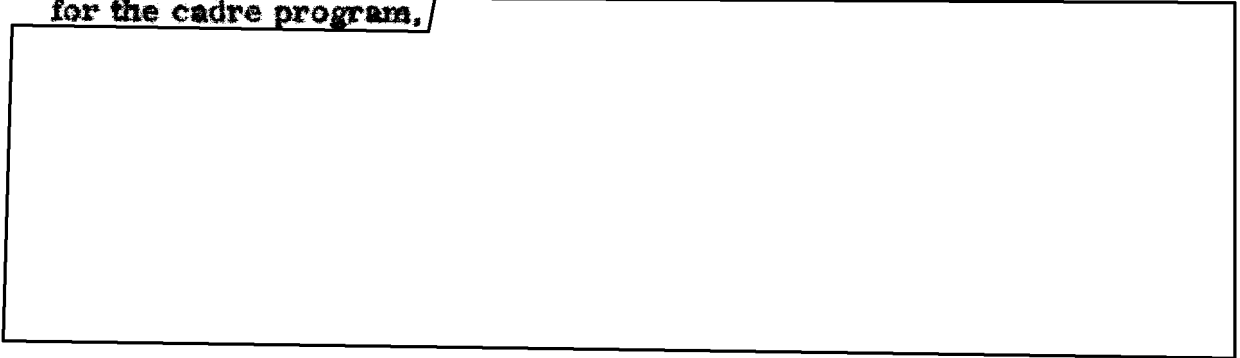
**CONFIDENTIAL**

12.

at Vung Tau before they enter specialized training for armed census grievance, civic affairs, new life development, and village self-defense and early warning activities.

b. Support:

(1) For the indeterminate future, i. e. , while USAID is getting ready to assume total or partial responsibility and support for the cadre program, /



25X1

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

13.

4. **Probable Future Trends within Rural Construction Cadre Operations**

a. **Increased support to national priority areas.**

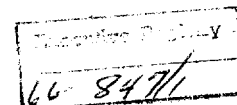
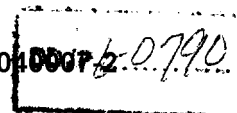
b. **Continuing reinforcement of areas where rural construction is already going on; where teams are already present; where corps or province priorities have been established; or where, in the judgment of the province or district chiefs, there is an opportunity for the effective utilization of the rural construction cadre.**

c. **A heavier emphasis on the development of Montagnard rural construction cadre in the provinces of I and II corps, and a very rapid increase in Vietnamese rural construction cadre for the use and reinforcement in III and IV corps generally.**

d. **Efforts to determine the best methods of applying the cadre program to the needs of the urban population and, subsequently, the implementation of such plans.**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**



23 FEB 1966

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence**

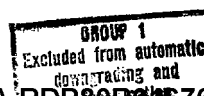
**VIA: Deputy Director for Plans**

**SUBJECT: Transmittal of Briefing Paper on Rural  
Construction Cadre Program to Vice  
President Hubert H. Humphrey**

1. Attached is a letter for the signature of the Director for transmittal to Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey. Also attached is a briefing paper prepared by Mr. Gordon L. Jorgensen, Chief of Saigon Station, concerning the rural construction cadre program.

2. The following is the background of the attached briefing paper and draft letter. Following an oral briefing by Mr. Jorgensen in Saigon on 12 February 1966, the Vice President requested that he be provided with a written resume prior to his departure and requested that this resume include any points which were not covered in the limited time available for the oral briefing. A written resume was prepared and delivered to the Vice President's Administrative Assistant, Mr. William Connell. The latter resume was subsequently slightly revised and improved and forwarded to Headquarters with Mr. Jorgensen's request that it be passed to the Vice President as a substitution for the paper given to Mr. Connell.

3. It is recommended that you sign the attached letter to the Vice President. The revised briefing paper on the rural construction cadre program which will be forwarded as an attachment



**CONFIDENTIAL**



**CONFIDENTIAL**

2.

to the letter is an excellent presentation of our role in the rural construction cadre program, and I commend it to your attention.



Chief, Far East Division

Attachment:

As stated above

cc: DDCI

25X1

**CONFIDENTIAL**